The CANADIAN NORTHLAND

JAMES ALBERT GREEN

VERSES OF

THE CANADIAN NORTHLAND

JAMES ALBERT GREEN

PS8513
R532
V47
1920

p***

I WRITE these verses because I love the far places of the north. They are a part of my life. And I hope my friends will read them for what they are—just little pictures of the lakes, the rivers and the woods.

JAMES A. GREEN.

Cincinnati,
December, 1920.

CONTENTS

Greeting to the Wilderness 7
The River 9
The Far-off Places 11
Islands 13
Lac Seul—Lonely Lake 14
The Forest Inn 17
Missiniabi 19
A Day Dream 21
Lake Kabinakagami 22

GREETING TO THE WILDERNESS

AWEARY of the world of books and men,
With joy I greet the Wilderness again.

These woods, these rocks, these lakes and rivers clear,
They waited for me all the tedious year.

They know no change, these old, old friends of mine;
They flourish in immortal youth divine.

We come and go—our life a little span,
But they were here when first the world began.

Our restless days, our nights of troubled sleep—
Contrast them with their joy and stillness deep.

They give to all who seek their healing balm—
Their strength, their freedom, their unbounded calm.

Oh friends of mine, I greet you once again
Let me forget the world of books and men.

THE RIVER

MY CANOE went down a river
Where the flame-flowers grew,
And wondrous wild red roses
And the stately iris blue.

There were ferns in the shadows
Of the spruce trees tall.
And ferns in the niches
Of the river's rocky wall.

And the rushes in the shallows
With the current gently swayed,
And the wild things of the forest
They were not a bit afraid.

And the golden-rod was blooming
Where the sunshine came,
And there were other flowers aplenty
That no man knows by name.

My canoe went down a river.
Oh, the Lord was good to me!
All these miracles and beauty:
And He gave me eyes to see.

THE FAR-OFF PLACES

THE far-off places that I love so well,
The far-off places where no white men dwell,
The far-off places with their solitudes,
The lonely rivers and the wide-stretched woods.

The wide-stretched woods wherein no pathways run,
Smiling and green beneath the summer sun;
Far off they are, yet near to me they seem,
The shining lake, the forest, and the crystal stream.

Amid the city's noise and rush and glare,
I see them now serene, and calm and fair;
I dream of them. I am of them a part —
Those far-off places shrined within my heart.

ISLANDS

ISLANDS always seem to me
Children of the Land and Sea.

Lulled by waves that ever sing.
Decked with youth that takes no wing.

Cradled on their mother's breast.
Children most supremely blest.

LAC SEUL—LONELY LAKE

WHAT lonely Dream-human, all unknown to fame,
Gave thee, thou many-islanded lake, thy name?

How far he was from home. His wanderer-bold
Who loved the summer's heat, the winter's cold.

On many a devious river he was lost,
And many a forest-studded lake he crossed.

But strong of heart, he pressed his northward way
Unharmed, though dangers all about him lay.

Until at last to this fair lake he came
And wrote his lonely humor in its name.

Perchance, he thought of home and wife and child,
And then looked out upon the forest wild.

Perchance, the day was drear with leaden skies
So that the lake seemed sad to his sad eyes.

Perchance, he was alone, none of his race
With the familiar speech and smiling face.

Perchance, the sight of this far inland sea
Sent him in thought back to his own countree.

A happier chance is ours that brings us here
In the high days when summer crowns the year

And all the waters laugh as at my glee,
And all the woods are gay with greenery.

And in the splendor of the setting sun,
A shimmering golden pathway seems to run

THE FOREST INN

HOW close and small a room will be
After this Inn of the Forest Tree.

This pleasant inn of the open air,
With boughs for beds and roughest fare

Where Genial Summer is the host,
And oh, the guests that he can boast.

The sun and stars and wind and rain,
They come and go and come again.

Such is the wonderful company
One finds at the Inn of the Forest Tree.

MISSINABI

HERE, where the rivers flow toward Hudson Bay.
Here, too, scarce a short arrow flight away,
The rivers southward flow—the Great Divide
'Twixt north and south—A little to one side
The rivers wend their way to lands of sun.
Step here a pace, to lands of snow they run.
Great lakes there are and rivers wild and free,
And forests wide that stretch from sea to sea.
No easy highway this, its dangers manifold.
A pathway for the daring and the bold.
And here we pause, in August's pleasant days,
To dream awhile of olden times and ways.
The Indian trader barters as of yore.
But now he runs a thoroughly modern store,
And says things are not as they used to be
When his main stock was flour and pork and tea.
Now, he has all the jimcracks from Broadway,
And breakfast foods from oatmeal to baled hay.
His goods arrive in no romantic style
By bark canoes o'er many a weary mile;
The railroad brings them to his very door.
The past is dead! Romance is here no more!
Wrong, wrong! The present and the past are one:
On the far lakes still shines the summer sun,
Unchanged the rivers north and southward flow.
The forests still in their wild beauty grow;

The islands and the rivers are the same,
Just as they were before the white man came;
And we in our canoes still make our way
As did the Indians in the earliest day.
Romance for us still lives, Adventure too,
As we o'er this old trail our way pursue.
On every portage path the Past we meet,
And each old river as a new friend greet
We face the sunshine and the wind and rain
We watch the moon to see it wax and wane;
At night, from out our tent doors opened wide,
We see the stars across the heavens ride!

A DAY DREAM

AWAKE, I dream and I behold
Far rivers rushing wild and free;
Flowing through forests dark and old,
To meet the everlasting sea.

And waterfalls in clouds of mist —
Below, the streams with foam are white.
The rapids flash with sunshine kissed,
Bathed in the flow of noon-day light.

Amid the city's smoke and grime,
All wide awake this dream I dream,
Of far-off woods in summer time,
And silent lake and silver stream.

LAKE KABINAKAGAMI

THOU art not lonely in thy lonely place,
The winds forever play about thy face.

They come like Suitors, the four winds to thee,
And all the year they bear thee company.

All softly warm from out the fervid south
Comes its mild wind with kisses in its mouth.

The west wind blows with ardor fierce and bold
And woos with passion wild and uncontrolled.

His raging brother from the north—rough, rude,
Comes storming ever in an angry mood.

The east wind, sad in jealous pain,
From his grey clouds sends down his tears in rain.

And thus in varying ways the seasons through,
These constant suitors woo and woo and woo.